

Pineland Squadron Newsletter

February 2007



Vol. 2007.

Issue 2.

February Meeting Agendas

Thursday February 1

Uniform: Blues. Testing, Safety, Uniform Insp.

Thursday February 8

Uniform: BDU. Drill, Aerospace

Thursday February 15

Uniform: PT Clothes. Physical Training

Thursday February 22

Uniform: BDU. Leadership, Moral Leadership, Cadet Discussion, Uniform Inspection

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

FINAL NOTICE!! SAREX

Saturday 27 JAN at TTN.
Van leaves Pineland at 0730. PRE-REGISTER with LTC Olszewski: rich-jo5@optonline.net and include what you want to do. You must be qualified in the specialty in which you plan to participate!

The Squadron May Participate in a parade for St. Patrick's Day on March 4th. More details to come but be ready to attend.

SAREX 17 FEB. More details to come.

Squadron Cleanup 24 FEB. More details to come.

Remembering Why To Drive Safely, Through A Co-worker's Death

By 1LT Mike Barbato

James Warnock, 17, probably didn't think anything of the drive he took with his friends, Michael Dragonetti, 17, and Andrew Lundy, 16, after school one Wednesday afternoon in January. That day, he and his two friends, along with 68-year old Ruth MacArthur, died on Kozloski Road in a car accident that will haunt Freehold Township for years.



James S. Warnock. Photo: Asbury Park Press

Both James and I worked for Brookstone, a higher-end "gadget" retail store. James was a member of the Freehold Mall store. That was my original place, but in January 2006 I became a member of the Menlo Park Mall store, due to its better proximity to my school. Although I no longer worked at Freehold continuously (except on and off during the summer) I did stop in whenever I could. I knew James and spoke with him several times during my visits. And about 10 days or so before the accident I was asked to fill in a shift at the Freehold store, which overlapped with a shift James was working. I can remember that day he taught me how to run a return sale (something the Freehold store authorized him to do, but that I could not). Had all gone according to plan I would have gotten to know him better this summer, when I move back home and transfer back to the Freehold store. I later learned, after his death, that James was also a former Cadet Staff Sergeant at Bayshore Squadron.

In all honesty I barely knew James Warnock, but his death had an affect on me.

Michael Dragonetti also worked at Brookstone of Freehold as a "seasonal" employee for the holidays. I don't recall ever meeting him. Investigators still aren't totally certain as to what caused the crash but they do believe that speed was a factor. It seems the Cadillac CTS, driven by Michael, was out of control and crossed into the opposite lane. Why were they out of control? We may never know exactly.

Accidents like this make all of us pause and re-examine ourselves. Aside from the sadness and horror of losing three young teens and a wonderful senior citizen, there are thoughts of our own vehicles. Our own driving habits come to mind. Moments like this remind us of why we in our organization maintain such a dedication to safety. (continued on page 2)

The New Jersey Wing Conference Is Coming!

The 2007 New Jersey Wing Conference is fast approaching. The weekend-long event is being held at McGuire AFB from March 30 through April 1. The event starts with a Friday reception and Cadet Ball. Saturday will contain the bulk of events with the General Assembly, award ceremonies, seminars, and the annual banquet. Sunday will be the Commander's Call. The Wing Conference is an outstanding opportunity to LEARN and to meet/network with other CAP Members. MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ATTEND AT LEAST SOME OF THE EVENTS!! Our very own Maj. Tracy is the project officer for the event.

Pineland Squadron Newsletter

February 2007



Announcements (cont.)

Still not Gen ES qualified? What are you waiting for!?! Go to <https://tests.cap.af.mil/ops/tests/default.cfm?grp=dos>

And take the test already!

Visit Us Online!!

<http://pineland.njwg.cap.gov>

Like pretty much all car accidents, this one was probably preventable.

Let's face it: New Jersey is not the easiest of places for a new, young driver to gain experience. We have winding roads and highways with complicated intersections and interchanges designed many decades ago, in no way suitable for the massive amounts of vehicles we have here today. And to top it off aggressive driving seems to be engrained in the State's cultural fabric. It means that us newer drivers (yes, that includes me at age 21) must go above and beyond in our caution and commitment to safety. There are a few basic tenants we can use to help us. My father always told me that it's not about what you're speedometer is reading per se, but rather that you're not "overdriving" the road. This means one must take into account the vehicle speed, roadway "shape", and roadway conditions and adjust our speed accordingly. It sounds simple, but some newer drivers may not know when they are overdriving the road, and by then it may be too late. So how do we stay safe while crawling along the learning curve? Here are those basic fundamentals:

-When in doubt, slow down!

-Slow down even more when weather conditions are not cooperative.

-Don't be in a hurry. Leave plenty of time to get to where you're going.

-Try to cautiously gain experience in more difficult driving situations with the help of an experienced adult driver.

-Keep you're head on a swivel, especially when going through intersections.

-Consider using headlights during the day when it's grey and cloudy, even if it's not raining or foggy. It will make you far more visible to other drivers.

-DON'T SPEED!

-When going somewhere unfamiliar, have a plan. Study maps and have a route set up. Look for possible trouble areas. The map website MapQuest even has aerial photos to help you get a better idea of the area.

-When in a complicated or difficult driving situation, consider going to a "sterile cockpit" to minimize distractions. Turn off the radio and perhaps even tell passengers to hold off on conversation. You can also use your passengers as spotters.

-New drivers should NEVER EVER use a cell phone while driving, even with a hands free device.

I'm not a professional driver so there are definitely more specific techniques out there to use. But aside from thoughts on when to use your headlights there is another important factor: your attitude. You must have an attitude that recognizes the need to be safe and the implications of failing in that responsibility. The implications can be far reaching. After the obvious possibility of injury or death there's the thousands of dollars in property damage caused by traffic accidents. Then of course there's the potential for the great all-American lawsuit, which is largely responsible for the high cost of auto insurance. People involved in car accidents (and their lawyers) love to milk injuries for lots and lots of money and will drag you through a stressful legal process.

.....

James Warnock's wake was a large and emotional event. Outside the funeral home police had set up a controlled pedestrian crossing and several news vans sat in the parking lot. Out front a massive line snaked around and around leading to the doorway. It was a two hour wait in the cold January rain that no one complained about. I arrived on my own but quickly found two groups that I knew. One from work, then further back a group of CAP members from Bayshore. I knew them and had not seen them in years. During the two hour wait I bounced back and forth between the two groups while slowly advancing to the door. People outside were in fairly good spirits. There was casual conversation and even smiles and jokes.

It was not until you entered the building that the mood changes. James liked techno dance music and the funeral home was playing that over their speaker system. It made it all the more surreal. Entering the viewing room is where it all hits you. Seeing all the pictures of James, his CAP uniform, karate uniform, his awards, his family, and his casket. The normally tough, aggressive male employees from Brookstone cried. It was hard not to, even for those like me who barely knew him. We pass by the casket greeting the family, then take one final look at his portraits before leaving the viewing room, still shaken and crying. We collect ourselves outside and just stand around in a circle not knowing what to do now. Until one of my coworkers mumbled quietly "lets get outta here". We walked to our cars and parted ways, still with a slow, sad step. What I noted the whole time was the profound affect that James' death imparted on me despite my limited encounters with him. He seemed like a great kid.

Why should we be safe? The answer is obvious.....